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### Successful IDOT Public Hearing

Written by Stephanie Vavra

Wednesday, 15 June 2011 18:57

Gilbert Janes assessed the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Open House Public Hearing held on Wednesday, June 15, 2011, at the United Methodist Church, 200 W. Lincolnway, Morrison, IL. The public was invited to attend between 1:00 and 7:00 p.m. There was plenty of conversation.

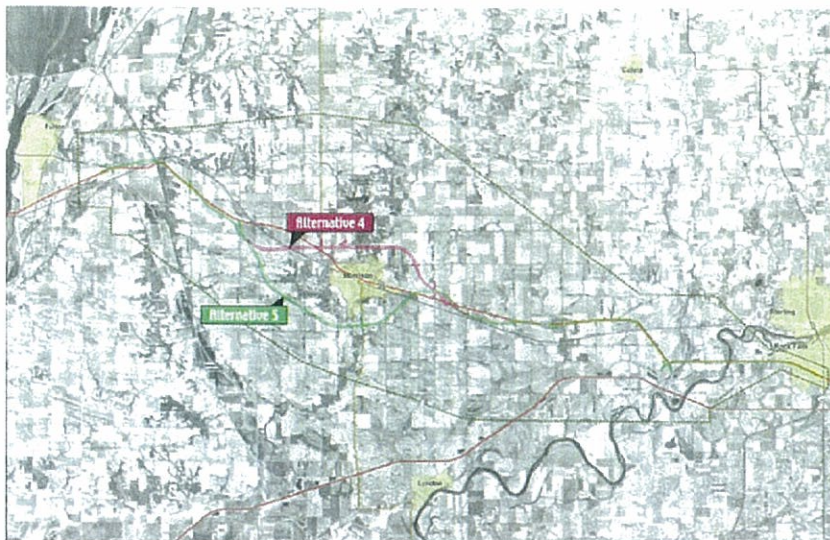


"It's been a nice, steady crowd; people are very interested. We're encouraging [them to share their opinions.] It's really good. People are taking ownership and pride in their community. No one [has been] unpleasant, [but] they certainly are expressing opinions. This is absolutely influencing our decisions," stated Janes.

He is Vice President of Business Development for Howard R. Green in Cedar Rapids, IA, and a Professional Engineer. This credential permits Janes to offer engineering services directly to the public. He has done so since 2007, to determine the impact of constructing a new, four-lane, Route 30 which would not pass through Morrison.

Last month on Tuesday, May 24, Janes offered a PowerPoint presentation to Morrison businesses, at the invitation of the Morrison Business Advisory Group (MBAG.) He answered 19 questions which MBAG members had submitted, before the meeting at the Odell Public Library Community Room. Examining 52 businesses, he acknowledged 17 are "traffic dependent," but added, "There are no direct business impacts within Morrison. **Eight businesses could experience "a reduction in business"** if the new Route 30 bypasses the City: DQ Grill & Chill; Parkview Motel; FS Fast Stop; Casey's General Store; Subway; Shop and Go Gas Station; Shell Gas Station; Hardee's. That is because they "are easy to see and recognize along [the current] Route 30," he explained.

Also in attendance at the Open House was Michael P. Walton, another P.E., with Volkert, Inc., who is deeply involved in the recently-published Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS.) This document discusses the Route 30 bypass alternatives that were evaluated, including IDOT's two proposed alternatives, as well as the project's potential impacts on the natural and man-made environment in the study area.



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Walton, at left, and Bridgett Jacquet, Environmental Manager of Volkert, Inc., third from the left, clarify information for John Prange and Mary Wright.



Walton conducted an extensive study of traffic through Morrison last year, focused on who would likely use the new 24-mile expressway. He had stated during the May 24 meeting with businesses that routes were being designed with these purposes and needs:

- safety
- to afford a lower level of service [traffic] on Route 30
- better opportunities to travel on Route 30.

He shared information with attendees about two proposed alternatives for a four-lane facility from IL Route 136--east of Fulton--to IL Route 40 in Rock Falls. These are designated **Alternative 4--traveling north around Morrison--and Alternative 5--running south.**

A third **No-Build Alternative** is possible, without creating a new roadway. In this case, according to Janes, there may be "some types of construction on the existing roadway such as resurfacing, and addressing safety and geometric improvements that may be necessary depending on traffic needs and highway conditions."

An [opinion poll running on the Op/Ed page](#) of thecity1.com asks, "What would you recommend to IDOT?" On Wednesday evening it indicated:

- "Do not build a bypass" was chosen by 52.4 percent of the respondents.
- "Southern route bypass" was selected by 23.8 percent.
- "Build truck bypass #78 to Sawyer," an earlier proposal no longer being considered, also was chosen by 23.8 percent.
- Zero respondents chose, "Northern route bypass."

Large map boards illustrated the two proposed routes, and smaller versions were available. People studied them, fingers indicating the location of their property. Property acquisition and relocation assistance information was available, but it was not easy to assess how land owners might be affected. Right-of-way land must be appraised for value, and then purchased by IDOT, before construction could begin.

At the May 24 meeting Janes stated, "There is no Land Acquisition Funding and Design Funding for this project. Legislators and regional and local governments could campaign for funds at Phase II."



Written comments were collected in a big, blue box, and Court Reporter Julie Edeus took oral testimony for the record. The public can submit their opinions through Friday, July 29, 2011. All "testimony" will be included in the official hearing record.

The Draft Environmental Impact Survey is also available in its entirety for public review and comment at IDOT's website <http://www.dot.il.gov/desenv/Environment/309/option.html> and at Odell Public Library, 307 S. Madison Street, Morrison, IL. The document discusses the alternatives that were evaluated, including IDOT's two proposed alternatives, and the project's potential impacts on the natural and man-made environment in the study area.

Comments on the DEIS can be sent to Eric S. Therkildsen, P.E., Illinois Department of Transportation, 819 Depot Avenue, Dixon, Illinois 61021 any time before July 29, 2011.

For more information about the US Route 30 Project visit:

<http://www.dot.state.il.us/us30/description.html>

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